

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

### Early June

Preliminary forecast data call letter sent to NTS generators

### Mid-July

Cutoff for preliminary data to NTS

### Early September

Request for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter Access Fee installment based on preliminary forecast - due by October 1<sup>st</sup>

### 30 days after DOE Appropriation Act is approved

Final forecast data call

### January 31<sup>st</sup> (or after final forecast assessment letters issued)

Final Access Fee payment due based on final forecast

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# ACCESS FEE AND FORECAST QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Low-Level and Mixed Low-Level Waste  
Disposal at the Nevada Test Site*



U.S. Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration  
Nevada Site Office Environmental Management Program

The Nevada Test Site (NTS) Access Fee was designed to stabilize disposal operations funding and reduce disposal costs throughout the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) complex. It was implemented as a two-year pilot program in October 2000. The pilot program was a success and was formally adopted in October 2002.

To provide additional details on the Access Fee, we offer answers to common questions raised during program implementation:

**Q.** *When does the NTS forecast letter go out to the generators?*

**A.** The preliminary forecast data call goes out in early June with the expectation that the NTS will have all preliminary data by mid-July.

**Q.** *When does the NTS make the final forecast data call?*

**A.** Within 30 days of the President signing the Energy and Water Appropriations Act.

**Q.** *What activities are contained in the Access Fee cost model?*

**A.** Disposal operations cost; emergency preparedness funding for rural counties; projected facility upgrades; projected capital equipment; safety basis and programmatic costs such as Documented Safety Analyses, environmental monitoring activities, and performance assessments. In addition, the Access Fee for mixed low-level waste includes the cost of verification (i.e., real-time radiography unit operation) and State of Nevada charges for hazardous waste.

**Q.** *When is payment due?*

**A.** If DOE's appropriations are approved prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, payment is due by January 31<sup>st</sup>. Otherwise, payment is due upon receipt of the quarterly or final NTS disposal assessment letters.

**Q.** *Can a generator dispose more waste at the NTS than was forecasted?*

**A.** Yes. Additional disposal volumes can be obtained by trading or buying unused volumes from other DOE offices.

**Q.** *Are refunds issued for any unused disposal volumes?*

**A.** No. The cost model for the Access Fee is based on maintaining adequate resources for the final waste volume forecast. However, a generator may sell or trade any unused volumes to another DOE site. In addition, volumes can be shifted between generators within a DOE office based on priorities or programmatic issues.

**Q.** *How is a new generator figured into the forecast?*

**A.** Typically, potential generators and their volumes are calculated into national forecasting efforts. However, if a new generator is not calculated into the final forecast and needs to dispose of waste, the new generator's DOE office may allocate its volume to the generator. Another option is for the DOE office to adjust some or all of its other generator volumes to accommodate the new generator.

**Q.** *Are there any penalties for not following the final forecast schedule?*

**A.** Yes. Although there is no financial penalty, there are no guarantees for a generator to transfer or acquire available volume if the generator does not meet the final forecast schedule.

**Q.** *Are there special provisions with regard to receipt of mixed low-level waste?*

**A.** Yes. The NTS is limited to accepting no more than 20,000 cubic meters (706,293 cubic feet) of mixed low-level waste between December 2005 and December 2010. As with low-level waste, mixed low-level waste must conform to the requirements of the NTS Waste Acceptance Criteria, which includes meeting Resource Conservation and Recovery Act requirements.